



Prescription Strength Skin Care

Jodi Thiessen speaks to Encino dermatologist **Dr. Joseph Raof** about treating aging and problem skin.

Dr. T. Joseph Raof sees many patients with skin problems from acne to pigmentation and everything in between. To ensure his patients are getting the correct treatment he says listening is an essential first step: "I usually start the consultation by listening to their complaints; then I can devise a plan for their skin," says Dr. Raof. "One problem can lead to another so they can't be treated in isolation. Most of the patients become educated about their skin through the process of the consultation and can take that knowledge with them."

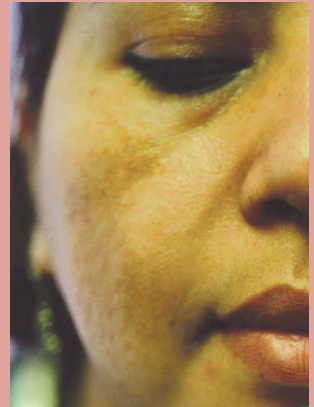
He analyzes the patient's skin type and gives concise instructions on how to achieve a positive outcome.

One procedure Dr. Raof finds helpful is skin scraping. "This helps acne, superficial pigmentation, clogged pores and wrinkles and gives the skin a fresher appearance," says the doctor. The procedure entails removal of the blackheads and then a special blade is used to lift away the top layer of dead skin cells called the strata corneum. By scraping away these cells, new skin cells are brought to the surface. Superficial pigmentation can be removed along with fine lines.

Using skin care at home is key to maintaining healthy skin



BEFORE



AFTER skin scraping by Dr. Raof

The process triggers a reaction in the skin to create more collagen, thus softening fine lines and giving the skin a smoother appearance. No anesthetic is required as it's not a painful procedure. The patient is able to wear makeup immediately to cover any pinkness that results. "It definitely takes skill to get the right level of scraping. By doing it manually, this allows a more individual approach and more control," explains Dr. Raof.

After the procedure, Dr. Raof uses his formulated skin care line to maintain the results. "I use specific technologies before and after the procedure, depending on what the skin problem is," states Dr. Raof. "There are lightening regimens for pigmentation, specialized acne treatments and anti-aging products to use at home. Sun block is also very important after skin scraping because the patient will be more susceptible to sun damage."

Using skin care at home is key to maintaining healthy skin. But, not just any skin care. Dr. Raof dispenses skin care with active ingredients that not only help treat problem skin but also maintain youthful skin and provides nutrition for healthier skin. His own pharmaceutical-based skin care line, Neutraderm, gives visible results. For example, if a patient has pigmentation, they are recommended the lightening regimen. To maximize the results the lightening cream base is injected with the correct amount of hydroquinone needed to deliver visible results. Other products include Retinol and CoQ10, a dynamic product for treating wrinkles. There is an acne range, which gives visual results after two months. There are also lactic acid, glycolic acid and salicylic acid products for problem acne or aging skin.

Dr. Raof says it's possible to have a dermatology practice that provides comfortable salon-like surroundings with medical strength capabilities. While the results can only be achieved through a clinical setting, Dr. Raof insists a visit to the dermatologist can be a very pleasant experience. **BS&B**

Other Non-Surgical Procedures Dr. Raof suggests

Laser Hair Removal

Laser hair removal uses a gentle focused beam of light that penetrates deep into the hair follicle, removing the hair with little risk of infection, pigmentation or scarring.

Botox® Injections

Many wrinkles are actually creases that have been worn into the skin by making the same expression thousands of times. Botox® injections smooth wrinkles by blocking the nerve impulse from reaching that area. As a result, the muscle relaxes and the wrinkles gradually soften and disappear.

Collagen

Facial wrinkles and creases are part of the aging process. They begin to appear as the underlying collagen and elastin fibers break down and wear out. While this breakdown is part of the natural aging process, it can also result from excessive squinting, frowning and smiling. Injectable bovine collagen and fat cells taken from your own body are the two most frequently used materials for filling facial wrinkles and frown lines.

Unwanted Facial & Leg Blood Vessels

Spider veins are found in over 100 million Americans, but they can be treated with sclerotherapy. A tiny injection into the vein, with a small amount of solution, constricts the veins, and makes them disappear. The injection is virtually painless.